Texas Government

GOVT 2306 Sec. 23204  Misty Dawn Parker
Spring 2019 (MW 12:00 – 1:20 PM)  Office: K240
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Purpose
This course is designed to introduce you to the state and local government and politics of Texas within the wider context of the United States federal system. As an introductory course, an understanding of the broad concepts related to state and local governance is the focus. The information you receive in this course should provide you with the tools and skills necessary to participate in state and local government, think critically about government policies and programs, and appreciate the role state and local government plays in your everyday life.

The course partially satisfies a requirement of 6 hours of American and state government for graduation from accredited Texas colleges and universities.

Required Textbooks/Course Materials

  Note: The Brookhaven College bookstore offers 30% off the regular new and used price for the textbook due to a special arrangement with the publisher (the rental price is around $25).

- Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, or access to any other major Texas newspaper. Knowledge of current events is essential to the course activities.

Technology Requirements
- Internet access (free access available in campus computer labs)
- USB flash drive and/or a cloud-based storage service for saving and backing up written coursework (I recommend DropBox or Google Drive; both are free to use)
- Active E-mail account that is checked often
- Basic use of a personal computer (word processing and internet browsing)
- Access to the DCCCD eCampus system: http://ecampus.dcccd.edu

Course Grading, Activities, Assignments, and Exams

Course Grading System
A = 90 – 100
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69
F = 0 – 59

Evaluation Procedure
All students will be equally and impartially evaluated on the following assignments:

Exams (3 x 15% each) = 45% of final course grade
Quizzes (5 of 6 x 2% each) = 10% of final course grade
Video Response Assignment (2 x 5% each) = 10% of final course grade
MANDATORY to PASS CLASS:
Texas Policy Paper Proposal = 10% of final course grade
Texas Policy Paper = 25% of final course grade

Course Activities, Assignments and Exams

Exams
There are three exams in this course. Each consists of multiple choice and fill-in-the-blank questions based on the readings, lecture, videos, and class assignments. See the course calendar for specific exam dates. The exam dates are firm so please plan your semester accordingly. The following policies are in place to maintain the integrity of the exams:

- Make ups will not be given except in the case of extraordinary and documented emergencies.
- You must contact me in advance should you need to miss a test for any emergency. I will require medical or legal documentation to justify your request to miss a scheduled test.
- No makeup tests will be permitted if you fail to contact me within 12 hours of the exam.
- Students arriving to class after the first exam has been turned in will not be allowed to take an exam.

Quizzes
There will be six pop quizzes covering the assigned readings and/or class lectures. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Students are expected to complete readings by the assigned date. The course calendar provides a specific list of chapters and due dates.

- Students must be present in class in order to receive credit for a quiz, unless directed otherwise by the instructor.
- The purpose of the quizzes is to assess your comprehension of the major topics or issues presented in the readings and in class.
- Reading/lecture notes may be referenced during a quiz.
- There are no quiz make-ups. (The lowest quiz grade will be dropped)

Video Response Assignments
You will have two video response assignments. Each video will be approximately an hour in length and will require a minimum two-page, double-spaced response to the questions presented. The video will be linked from eCampus, and the response assignment will be due on eCampus approximately two class periods after we have discussed a related topic in class. The due dates for the response assignments are listed in the course calendar below and on the eCampus page. The responses should be your individual work. Further instructions will be provided in class and on eCampus.

*Formal Assessment Guidelines – Texas Policy Paper (*Mandatory)

Introduction
This activity is an opportunity for you to closely examine a contemporary policy issue between the state of Texas and the United States federal government. Over its history, the Texas government has had many conflicts with the national government as part of the dynamics under a federal system of governance (federalism).

Completing this activity is a mandatory component of this course. It serves as the standard course assessment for all GOVT 2306 students at Brookhaven College. Failure to submit and complete this project in its entirety will result in a failing grade for the course.

There are four steps to completing this project.
Step 1 – Identifying the Issue

Identify a federal issue between the US federal government and Texas state government. This requires examining the history, application and effectiveness of laws at both levels.

You must choose one of the following topics, or select your own (with approval from me):

- Women’s rights and access to contraceptive and abortion services
- Business regulations and equal opportunity hiring for ex-felons
- Public education policy and school choice
- Public education policy and education funding
- Wildlife conservation policy and hunting limits/seasons
- Environmental policy and hydraulic fracturing (aka fracking)
- Environmental policy and deep-water drilling
- Immigration policy and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Preclearance requirements and the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- NAFTA and the Texas economy
- Constitutional rights of immigrants in Texas
- Federal firearms policy and gun rights
- The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 and state-level marijuana policy

Step 2 - Gathering Sources

Conduct research to locate a minimum of three peer-reviewed academic journal articles (aka: scholarly sources) that address the policy issue that you selected and meet the following criteria:

- The articles must be no more than ten (10) years old.
- The article must have more than five (5) pages of actual content (without graphs, charts, footnotes, citations, etc.).
- Books will not count toward the scholarly source minimum requirements.
- Carefully choose those sources that provide a variety of perspectives on your selected topic.
- In addition to the minimum research requirements, you should offer “supplemental sources” for essential current events information relevant to your topic. These may include academic sources that are not peer-reviewed (position papers), newspaper articles, magazine articles, and other quality or reputable sources.
- The course textbook, encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), and almanacs, are reference materials and are not to be listed as sources on the collegiate level.
- Provide the formal MLA citation for each source, both in the essay and on the References page.

Step 3 – The Proposal

*Failure to submit the Proposal by the assigned due date, or revise and resubmit upon request, will result in a minimum letter grade deduction from the final Policy Paper grade.

Submit a one page proposal to the appropriate eCampus dropbox by the date specified in the course calendar. The proposal should:

- Identify the topic in a single paragraph:
  - Summarize the policy topic you will be addressing
  - Describe the current status of the policy or topic as it relates to the differing roles and/or positions of the federal and state governments
  - Describe why this policy is important to Texas and the United States
- Include a bibliography listing the three primary sources. The bibliography should be formatted using MLA citation style.

An example of a good policy proposal is provided in eCampus.

**Revise and Resubmit Policy:** The purpose of the proposal process is for your instructor to confirm that 1) you have selected three appropriate scholarly, peer-reviewed sources and 2) that you have selected an appropriate topic. Additionally, it allows your instructor to give you feedback on your writing (grammar, sentence composition, punctuation, and spelling) as well as your use of proper MLA citation formatting.

Should you submit a proposal that does not address a federal issue between the state and the federal government, or one in which three scholarly sources are not provided, you will be asked to “revise and resubmit” the assignment. In such cases, a minimum letter grade deduction is always applied to the resubmitted assignment. The instructor will inform you of the due date and conditions of resubmission. Failure to resubmit the revision before the provided due date, or failure to correct the identified issues in need of revision, will result in a zero for the proposal grade.

**Step 4 – The Policy Paper**

Your task will be to prepare a formal research paper regarding the selected policy. The assignment should be 5-7 pages with citations for your research. The minimum writing requirement is a 1000 of your own words or 3 pages of a word document (excluding cited information). Meeting the minimum requirement simply allows the assignment to receive points above zero.

The essay is to discuss each of the following prompts:
- An introduction and brief overview of the policy topic.
- What are the major issues facing each level of government?
- What are the reasons for initiating changes to the policy?
- What are the options to be considered (discuss several)?
- What are the pros and cons of each potential reform (costs v. benefits)?
- Which is the best option moving forward (pick one)?
- A summary and conclusion

**Special Notes:**

The grading standards used to assess the quality of your work for this project are detailed in a grading rubric provided in eCampus.

It is strongly suggested that every student read ahead and use the library database during the first week of the course to begin researching a topic. This project requires carefully planning throughout the semester.

Refer to the course calendar for the specific due date. The final product is to be submitted as a single file via the submission guidelines identified by the instructor. Please consult the Writing Checklist at the end of the syllabus and the Guidelines for All Coursework in the syllabus.

**Procrastination on this project has resulted in some students, who were otherwise passing, having to fail and repeat the course.**

Any student wishing to bring a friend, child, family member, or other acquaintance to class must receive advance permission from the instructor. As a general rule, students are prohibited from bringing their children to class.
Course Policies

Attendance
Attendance and participation are essential to your success. I expect all students to be seated and ready for class at 12:00 p.m. Persistent and repeated late arrivals to class will be addressed with the student. Anytime you miss class, it is your responsibility to stay current with all assignments.

Any student wishing to bring a friend, child, family member, or other acquaintance to class must receive advance permission from the instructor. As a general rule, students are prohibited from bringing their children to class.

Late Work Policy
All assignments are expected on or before the deadline indicated in the syllabus. Any student that needs to submit late work must contact me before the deadline for approval and make arrangements; approval will be granted on my discretion. You may be required to provide some form of written documentation in order to substantiate a request to submit a late assignment. Technical or mechanical issues are never grounds for submission of late work.

Late work will be penalized 10 points per day for every day it is late. If the assignment has not been submitted within 5 days of the original deadline, it will receive a zero. Note that a zero for the research project will result in an F in the course.

DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS, LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED FOR THE FINAL TERM PROJECT.

Extra Credit
On each exam, there will be 5 bonus questions which can serve to increase your exam grade by 5 points. Bonus questions will be based on current events, so be sure to keep up with the news while taking this course. In addition, attending an approved on-campus workshop will result in a 1% final grade increase, with a maximum of three workshops a student can attend for extra credit (a maximum of 3% in extra credit possible).

Technology Policy
We are all adults and can prioritize our time and attention however we want, but be aware that if you prioritize internet or cell phone usage over paying attention in class, your grade will almost surely reflect that decision. If at any point your computer or cell phone usage becomes disruptive to others (including myself), your privilege to use them in class will be revoked at my discretion.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism
The DCCCD defines plagiarism as: the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work.

The following are acts of Plagiarism:
- copying and pasting from the Internet without attribution
- buying, stealing, or ghostwriting a paper
- using ideas or quotations from a source without citation (e.g. “forgetting” to use quotation marks)
- paraphrasing an author too lightly

There is a zero-tolerance policy in effect towards plagiarism. Any student that submits work containing plagiarized material will immediately receive an F for the course and be reported to Brookhaven administration for disciplinary action.
Course Performance Guidelines

Guidelines for all Coursework

All assignments for this course must comply with the following requirements to be considered a complete project (incomplete items will receive a zero). Please read these requirements carefully:

- The deadline for all activities has been clearly identified in the course schedule. All assignments are due at the start of class on the date indicated. Assignments not listed will be assigned due dates in class.
- Each student is responsible for confirming the completion or submission of coursework. Files submitted to eCampus that are incomplete, blank, cannot be read by SafeAssign system, opened in Microsoft Word or which are otherwise corrupted will automatically receive a zero as non-submissions.
- **There is a specific course policy regarding late work.** Tests, quizzes, class activities and extra credit are excluded from the late work policy and are always due by the stated deadline. Late work will only be accepted in a case where there are extenuating circumstances that the instructor was informed about in advance of the deadline.
- All writing assignments are to have a cover page with the following information: Your name, course / section #, semester, word count and essay topic. Word counts do not include citations, quotes, cover pages, or a bibliography.
- The formatting requirements for all written assignments are: typed / word processed, double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman script, 1-inch margins (default setting), and a limited number of grammatical errors. Handwritten work is not acceptable for formal college coursework.
- All assignments are expected to meet college level writing requirements. Any assignment that does not meet minimum requirements will be return for revision and resubmission with an automatic letter grade deduction.
- The minimum writing expectation for each assignment or activity must be satisfied to earn a grade. Any work that is incomplete upon submission will receive a zero. There is no credit for partial work.
- All key arguments, assertions, claims, and facts must be supported with research. Provide the full MLA citation for all outside sources. All references are to be documented within the body of the assignment and on a works cited page. Failure to identify sources is plagiarism.
- Do not use first person tense in a college essay unless the assignment specifically requires or asks for it.
- Use parenthetical citation style; do not use footnotes or endnotes.
- All pages of an assignment (cover page, body text, and works cited) must be submitted to the appropriately titled dropbox on eCampus. Hard copies will not be accepted unless otherwise noted.
- Assignments submitted online must be in one of the following file formats: doc (or docx), or pdf. Other document formats are unacceptable.
- Acceptable sources for writing assignments: Certain sources should never be cited in college-level work. These include generic reference materials such as Wikipedia.com, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and course text books. Furthermore, do not use any edition of the *Opposing Viewpoints* series, either; they are designed for high school, not college.
- Work submitted in other courses cannot be submitted in this course without prior consent. Submitting an assignment that has been used in another course, without prior approval, will result in a zero for that activity.

Course Honor Code

Scholastic dishonesty is a violation of the DCCCD Student Code of Student Conduct. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. Students are expected to complete all course work by their own efforts and in their own words.

Statement of Academic Freedom

The collegiate environment is one that promotes tolerance, understanding, communication and equality. Use the guidelines below in your interactions with the instructor and your peers:
Students are provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their comprehension of political issues and express their understanding of key points in this course. The discussion format in particular is an opportunity for students to enjoy their constitutional right to free speech and expression. This is not intended to serve as a platform for one to express their political ideology or personal feelings about a given issue. It is a forum for an intellectual dialogue and an exchange of ideas. Again, the expectation is that you will conduct yourself to the standards befitting a college student engaged in an intellectual dialogue (both inside and outside the classroom). Academic freedom will be protected and respected by all students and the instructor. However, there are some limitations on free speech. Hateful, sexist, racist, hurtful, or otherwise obscene comments that are intended as a personal attack will not be tolerated. Additionally, any dialogue that does not specifically pertain to the topic at hand will not receive an audience. At the instructor's discretion, a student that violates these guidelines may be removed from the course and possibly the campus.

**Course Etiquette**

- **E-mail** – Please allow 48 hours for a reply via e-mail. There may be periods where it may take longer to get a reply (such as weekends). Again, be patient and allow me some time to get back to you. For any technical issues, please contact the technical support team.
- **Communication Dialogue** – Personal attacks, racial or ethnic slurs, outbursts or other inappropriate forms of communication will result in immediate removal from the class and possibly from the college (see academic freedom statement).
- **Personal Requests** – I am happy to assist you with any questions you may have about the course, college, or life in general. However, personal requests for exemptions to course policies will not be granted unless there is a legitimate reason. It is a form of discrimination by the instructor to grant exceptions without basis. Any exceptions made may require documentation and will only be considered in advance of a deadline.
- **Visitors** – Verbal permission of the instructor must be received in order for any visitors (e.g. family members, friends, or acquaintances) to attend any portion of this course. Permission must be granted prior to the scheduled visitation.
**Course Calendar:** Additional readings will be assigned during the semester; readings are to be completed before class on the date specified.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>Introduction to Course: Syllabus Overview</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>Chapter 1 – The Political Culture, People, and Economy of Texas</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>Chapter 2 – The Texas Constitution</td>
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<td><strong>Week 4</strong></td>
<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>Chapter 3 – Texas in the Federal System</td>
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<td><strong>Video Response Assignment #1: The Pot Republic</strong> Due on eCampus at 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>Chapter 4 – Political Parties</td>
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<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>Mar. 4</td>
<td>Chapter 7 – Texas Legislature</td>
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<td>Texas Policy Paper Proposal due on eCampus by 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter 8 – Texas Executive</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter 9 – Texas Judiciary</td>
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<td>Chapter 10 – Local Government</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
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<td>Exam 2 (in class)</td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
<td>Apr. 22</td>
<td>Chapter 6 – Interest Groups and Lobbying</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter 12 – Public Policy</td>
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<td><strong>Week 15</strong></td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Chapter 11 – Public Finance in Texas</td>
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<td><strong>Week 16</strong></td>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Chapter 13 – Crimes and Corrections Policy</td>
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<td><strong>Video Response Assignment #2: Separate and Unequal</strong> Due on eCampus at 12:00 p.m.</td>
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*The instructor reserves the right to amend the course and/or the syllabus as necessary.*
Addendums

DCCCD Institutional Policies

Please click on the following link to be aware of institutional policies at Brookhaven that may impact you as a student: [https://www.Brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum](https://www.Brookhavencollege.edu/syllabusaddendum)

INSTRUCTOR’S RIGHT TO MODIFY: The instructor has the right to add, delete, or revise this course syllabus in any way. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor and seeking clarification for any item that is not understood.

Withdrawal Policy – Last day for a ‘W’ is April 17, 2019:

If you are unable to complete this course, it is your responsibility to withdraw formally. Do not simply stop attending the course. The withdrawal request must be received in the Registrar’s Office by (semester’s drop date). Failure to do so will result in your receiving a performance grade, usually an “F.” If you drop a class or withdraw from the college before the official drop/withdrawal deadline, you will receive a “W” (Withdraw) in each class dropped.

Certification of Attendance and Financial Aid: You must attend and participate in your on-campus and online course(s) in order to receive federal financial aid. Your instructor is required by law to validate your attendance and participation. In an online course, you must participate in an academic related activity pertaining to the course in order for your attendance to be validated. Simply logging-in is not sufficient by itself to demonstrate academic attendance. You must demonstrate that you are participating in your online class and engaged in an academically related activity by the certification date. The academic related activity used to validate online course participation is at the discretion of your instructor.

This statement of certification of attendance applies to all students enrolled regardless of whether they are receiving financial aid or not. All students must be certified.

GOVT 2306 – Texas Government. This is a Texas Common Course Number.

Prerequisite: The following must be met: (1) DREA 0093 or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0044 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Reading Standard AND (2) DWRI in 0093, or English as a Second Language (ESOL) 0054 or have met the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Writing Standard.

Course Description: Origin and development of the Texas constitution, structure and powers of state and local government, federalism and inter-governmental relations, political participation, the election process, public policy, and the political culture of Texas. Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 4510025125.

Student Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Describe state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies and political culture of Texas.

Core Objectives for GOVT 2306
1. Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
4. Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.